

Will this ever end?

That question has really plagued me since I first came to St. Andrew's on Palm Sunday. Reopening for public worship seemed to be a possibility, at least in my optimistic view. As we approached mid-June, Seguin was hovering with a handful of active COVID cases, and we were easily meeting the 14-day downward trajectory requirement in the Bishop's guidance for safe reopening. But then, things started back up.

On June 15, Seguin went from 2 active cases the previous week to 9. Two weeks later, it was 24; and on July 20 the number had risen to 180. According to studies conducted at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta (<https://tinyurl.com/y3y759rs>), if 50 people are in one place in Guadalupe County TX, there is a 76% chance that at least one of them will be COVID-19 positive and contagious. In a group of 25, the risk is still 51%. I'm not convinced those odds represent safe reopening.

While there is still much to learn about this virus, it is increasingly clear that people over 65 and those with underlying medical conditions, particularly diabetes, are vulnerable to contracting the disease, though no age group is immune. I am deeply appreciative of Bishop Reed's guidance in this matter; but regret that I will never be able to lead public worship in this place.

I am aware that other denominations and independent churches may be operating under different guidance (or none at all). For instance, St. James Catholic Church is open, albeit with significant restrictions (<http://saintjamescc.org/covid-19-updates/>) similar to those we would observe once we meet that 14-day decline again. My prayer is that we will get there again by the end of August, so that Father Shortess will be able to lead you in public worship upon his arrival in September.